

THE
COALITION;
OR,
THE OPERA REHEARS'D.

A COMEDY,
BY THE
EDITOR OF THE SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE.

PRICE 1s. 6d.



THE OPERA HOUSE

A COMEDY

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "MARRIAGE OF FIGARO"

—

THE
COALITION;
OR,
THE OPERA REHEARS'D.

A COMEDY,
IN THREE ACTS.

BY THE
EDITOR OF THE SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE.

—Valeat res ludicra!

HOR.



BATH, PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL,
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C. DILLY, POULTRY; and G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, PATER-
NOSTER-RROW, LONDON.

MDCCCXIV.



TO
THE HONOURABLE MISS LEIGH,
THE AMIABLE REPRESENTATIVE
OF A
TRULY NOBLE AND ANCIENT FAMILY,*
WHOM,
FROM HIS INFANCY,
HE HAS KNOWN AND RESPECTED;
THIS DRAMATIC SKETCH
IS,
WITH SINCERE REGARD,
INSCRIBED;
BY
HER OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

• LORD VISCOUNT TRACEY.

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N.B. THE OPERA IS REPRINTED WITH ADDITIONS.

7

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE true history of the following performance will be the best apology for this attempt of the Author's in the dramatic line, so foreign to his profession, and for which his retired situation may seem to render him not sufficiently qualified.

The Opera* alluded to (of ECHO and NARCISSUS) had been set to music, without the Author's knowledge, by an ingenious Musician at Bath; and was performed at the Upper Rooms there under the patronage of a Lady of Quality,† with considerable applause, but at a considerable expence: in hopes of reimbursing himself, therefore, the Musician *importuned* the Author to add the *comic* part; with a view to bringing it on a London Theatre: but this

* Printed in Euphrosyne, vol. ii. written at the request of a young Gentleman of a noble family, to whom the Author had obligations; but since altered with additions, &c.

† Duchefs of A——.

was not so easily accomplished: it lay two years in the Manager's hands, who, whatever its merit or demerit might be, said it would not answer the Musician's end.

The Author now gives it to the public, as a beggar, when he has no further use for them, leaves his tatter'd exuviae on the public road, if haply they may be of service to some poorer devil than himself. There *are* one or two characters, which were thought by the Author's friends to be tolerably drawn;—they are taken from the middle ranks and domestic life, rather than from the fashionable circles; with which *he* does not pretend to have been much conversant.

Indeed our manners have undergone so rapid a change within these six years, when the comic part was written, and fashion has made such inroads into the provinces of taste and literature, as well as of music and dress, that a man who goes but seldom into public life must be puzzled with such equivocal appearances, and
such

such ænigmatical *phrases*, as would defy Ædipus himself to explain.

The rage for *private* theatrical exhibitions, however alluded to in the Prologue, does not seem much diminished: How far the *moral* purposes of the stage may be promoted by these *unlicensed* performers, time must discover. The grand *political* object of *population*, at least, will probably be considerably promoted; and, I make no doubt, but many a noble family (whose prayers for a blessing on their *endeavours* may have hitherto proved ineffectual) will, by some lucky incident in these dramatic *performances*, be furnished with an *heir* to their titles and estates.



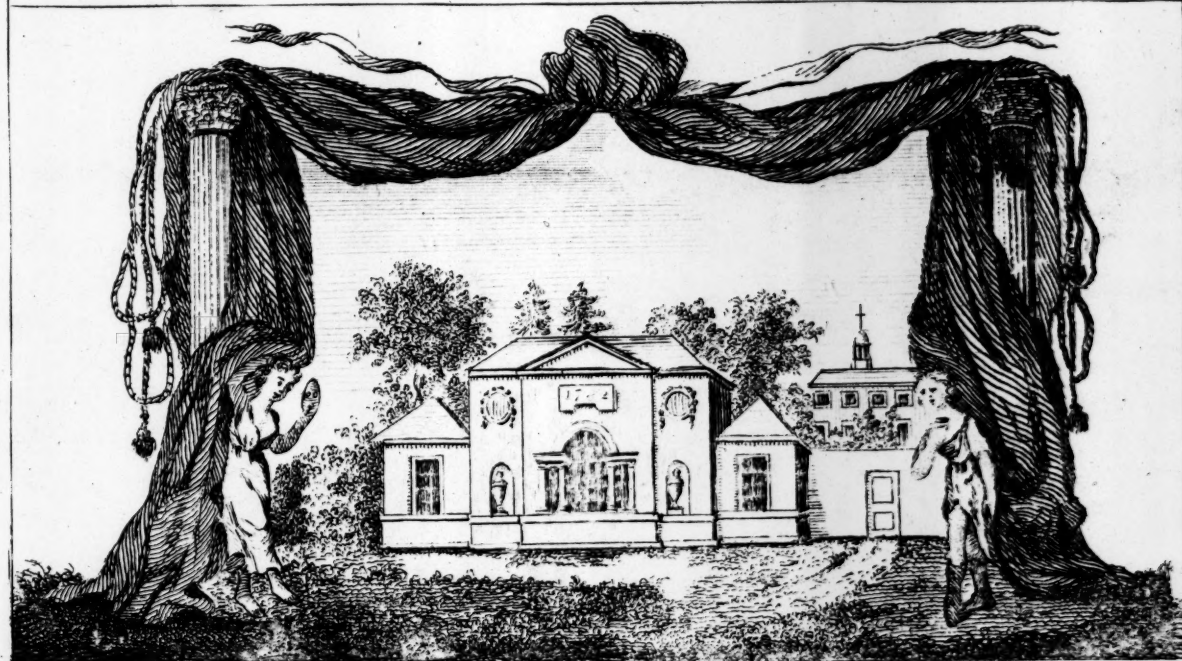
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however, which is in the
form much diminished; and the
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(which is a great blessing on their
every man has his own
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View of the Theatre at Wynnstay.



H. Bunbury Esq. del.

WYNNSTAY.

Published Feb. 27. 86 by J. Sewall Cornhill

PROLOGUE.

WHAT SHAKSPERE utter'd with a *moral* view,
In our blest days is *literally* true:

'Tis now a fact, that ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE,
For all the world are Actors in *this* age.
Not only Men and Women *now* are Players:
Even *Children* spout before they've learnt their prayers,
Whether in private or in public schools,
Boys learn to act—and fling their grammar rules;
Nay, Lords and Ladies, Knights and Country Squires;
The Cit himself at GARRICK'S fame aspires,

In some Great Families, 'tis sorely fear'd,
(As whisper'd by their Chaplains, I have hear'd)
The *moral* Works of our Dramatic Bards
Engross more time than Sermons—nay, than *Cards*.

In provinces, where scarce a Church is found,
These well-frequented Theatres abound:
And, should we go to Blenheim or Winstay,*
It would not be to *act*, but *see* a play:
And fit like fools, surpass'd in our own art;
Admiring! how the Ladies *top* their part.
These act for fame†—there are who act for gain;
And patentees their patents plead in vain.

* The feat of Sir W. W. Wynne, at that time famous.

† Some young Bucks in Bath at that time; and the Royalty Theatre.

Nay,

Nay, 'midst this splendid audience here, who knows
 What excellent performers fill the rows?
 Even GARRICK's self might here, perhaps, be taught—
 And, dare *we* act before them? “dreadful thought!”
 Yes, boldly act: for such an Audience fill
 Must judge with candour equal to their skill.

Yet, we to-night are but a kind of factors;
 And represent and *act* for Country Actors.
 If then their goods are bad, we're not to blame:
 To *Coventry*† we'll send them—whence they came.

But, if the *Musick* some slight pleasure yields
 (For th' Author's not a LINLEY or a SHIELDS)
 Know, sirs, it was perform'd, without a hiss,
 At Bath's grand Rooms—where this metropolis
 Has still a standing critical Committee
 Of judges learned, noble, fair, and witty:
 Who all agreed (for 'twas perform'd with spirit)
 The *Composition** had its share of merit.

May then *this House* confirm the kind decree
 Of Bath's indulgent Court of Chancery!
 And, should you like him *tolerably* well,
 Crush not th' unfledg'd Composer in the shell:
 But if his wish to *please*, your smiles should bless,
 HANDEL himself might envy his success.

† A military phrase.

* The musical part.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Mr. LONGFIELD, a Country Gentleman, father of *Letitia*.
CAPTAIN JOHNSON, in Love with *Letitia*, disguis'd as a hair-dresser.
YOUNG WILLOUGHBY, engaged to *Myrtilla*, disguised as above.
BILLY MERRYDEN, Son of *Sir William M.* and brother to *Myrtilla*.
JETHRO, a conceited old Servant to *Longfield*.
TOM, an aukward Foot-boy to ditto.

WOMEN.

LETITIA LONGFIELD, an heiress, intended for her Cousin *Billy Merryden*, but privately engaged to *Capt. Johnson*.
MYRTILLA MERRYDEN, engaged to *Young Willoughby*.
JOYCE, Servant to *Miss Longfield*.

CHARACTERS IN THE OPERA.

ECHO, a Nymph in Love with *Narcissus*; performed by *Miss Longfield*.
NARCISSUS, a Youth too fond of his own Person, performed by *Billy Merryden*.
PENEUS, father of *Echo*, performed by
LERISSA, her Mother, performed by *Myrtilla Merryden*.
ARCAS, a Companion of *Narcissus* in his Sports, performed by *Jones*, the Curate's Son.
PAN, a Sylvan God, in love with *Echo*, performed by

SPECTATORS OF THE OPERA.

GOLDWIRE, a fine-spoken Citizen, of superficial reading, lately settled in the Country.
JUSTICE SHORT, a blunt Sportsman.
Their WIVES and DAUGHTERS, and OTHER SPECTATORS.





ACT I. SCENE I.

An old Hall in Squire LONGFIELD's house; who enters in an old-fashion'd laced Coat, but in his night-cap and slippers, with a crutch-stick, talking to his Servant.

LONGFIELD.

WELL, Jethro; you must get things in good order to night. Mr. Goldwire's family have never been here, you know, since they came to settle in the country: And these Londoners are plaguy nice and finical.

Jethro. Yes, Sir, they make a joke of every thing in the country.

Long. To be sure, Mr. Goldwire, who called here one morning, is a very civil, fine-spoken man; but they'll smile in your face, and laugh at you behind your back.

Jethro. Yes, yes; I have seen enough of them. The Butler, that came here t'other morning with his hair in papers, turn'd up his nose at our ale; and desired Mrs. Joyce to give him a dish of tea, forsooth.

Long.

Long. Ay, very likely.—I should not mind my neighbour Short's family; *they* live much as we do.

Jethro. Yes, fir; I think I can lay a cloth as well as Justice Short's Humphrey, any day in the week; and as for the Squire himself, one need not be afraid of *him*——

Long. Why, to be sure, Mr. Short is a man of *few words*, but he's a very honest man, and a good Sportsman. Well; but what fine fellows these Coventry hair-dressers are! I suppose they cannot '*drink ale*' neither.

Jethro. Very likely—for they are Lon'oners, too.

Long. Londoners!

Jethro. Yes, fir: they are only come down against this *Commiseration-musick*—they are as proud as Lucifer too—they call'd me nothing but "*honest man*," and bade me take care of their horses. Sure! I han't lived in your worship's service so long, to be call'd "*honest man*" by such fellows as these.

Long. Why, proud people, Jethro, never think it worth while to call people by their *right* names. Well, I don't approve of such impudent rascals straddling over a young Lady's petticoats: and I think Joyce might have dress'd their hair well enough. But

my



my niece Myrtilla Merryden must have every thing in the highest taste.

Jethro. Yes; and Mrs. Joyce says, these fellows don't half understand their business neither. One of them is only a captain's servant, who is learning to dress hair. And yet I suppose they will expect *half-a-crown* a piece, for coming only five miles.

Long. Yes; more likely half-a-guinea apiece, but 'tis only for once to humour Miss Myrtilla Merryden. For I don't at all approve this acting of plays.

Jethro. No, sir, nor I neither;—it's nothing but a little *ta'aking* and joking, to make people laugh and get their money.

Long. Well; this is not a play, however, but an *opera*, as they call it—and is all musick and singing. They laugh and scold, quarrel and make love; and all to some *tune*, (as one may say.)

Jethro. Yes, I have heard 'em at it all day long.

Long. Why, my daughter Letty sings your Italian, and your Duets and Rondos, and those things; and as they were always acting plays at Sir William Merryden's, *they* made *her* act a part too.

Jethro. Yes, so Mrs. Joyce told us; and says, the house was full of company the whole time they were there——

Long.

Long. (shaking his head.) Well, I wish Sir William can afford these things. My sister Merryden is a good manager; but they have a large family to provide for. As for this Billy Merryden, he shall marry my daughter, and, as I have no son, take my name.

Jethro. Yes, fir; so I have heard your worship say.

Long. Poor Myrtila here is a fine young woman; but will have no great fortune. However, as she and Letty had a mind to give me a specimen of their acting, I was willing to humour them for this once; but it's a troublesome affair.

Jethro. Yes, fir; it's next kin to shearing a pig, great cry and little wool; and it lies all upon *me*.

Long. Well, you go and get things in order: and call Abraham out of the barn; and let him put on Robin's old great coat with a red cape, and let him stand at the iron-gate.

Jethro. Very well, fir.

Long. And, d' you hear, Jethro? Let Tom have Robin's old livery waistcoat, and stand at the hall door: It's *rather* too long for him, but that cannot be help'd.

Jethro. Well, well, fir; Miss Letty has order'd all these things; and Mrs. Joyce has tied up Tom's hair in black ribband; and——

Long.

Long. Very well; you bring my brigadeer wig off the block, and send Tom with my best shoes: and, d' you hear, Jethro! when you see Mr. Goldwire's coach coming, run and light *both* the candles in the great parlour.

Jethro. Very well, sir. *[Exit Jethro.]*

Long. solus. I have had so little company since my wife died, and my daughter has been at school, that I am forced to manage these things myself. Come, Tom! bring my best shoes immediately—*(calling Tom!)*

Tom (within.) Yes, ees! coming, Sir.

Scene changes.

Enter TOM, in an old livery waistcoat, a foot too long for him; his hair tied in a ribband, with an enormous pair of shoes in one hand, which he sets down, and a crust of bread in the other.

Tom. Here's such a plaguy hurry, since young Madam came home—a body has not time to eat one's victuals.

Re-enter JETHRO, calling Tom, Tom!

Tom. Ees! ees! coming—coming—

Jethro. Here, make haste and clean these knives, and then come and help me to set the benches for the play.

Enter

Enter Mrs. JOYCE, calling Tom!

Tom. Ees! ees! coming! what the plague do you want too?

Joyce. What do I want! don't *what* me, you faucy clown: do you know whom you are speaking to?

Tom. Yes, ees! I know who you be; young madam's waiting-maid, now——Though—

Joyce. Waiting-maid! fauce-box! suppose I am a *waiting-maid*; I *may* be—but its beneath me to talk to such a vulgar creature—waiting-maid! indeed—

Jethro. Come, don't stand parling here; what do you want of Tom, Mrs. Joyce?

Joyce. Why, he must run to Parson Jones's, and tell him and his wife to come and see the play to-night, without fail. And bid Dorcas send young Mr. Jones's green-shag waistcoat and his shot-pouch, for *Harkelas* to act the huntsman in.

Jethro. What the devil has the huntsman to do with the shot-pouch?

Joyce. Oh! that's for the shepherd's boy, I suppose, who is to court Miss Letty.

Jethro. Yes; here will be courting and kissing enough, I suppose. But you need not send for clothes to act in. These *barbers* have brought a boy with a whole cloke-bag of clothes—by Miss's orders.

Joyce.

Joyce. Barbers! Mr. Jethro: *hair-dressers* is not *barbers*: they don't shave. A hair-dresser is as much of a *gentleman* as Mr. Goldwire's butler Mr. John.

Jethro. Goldwire's butler! who the devil made him a gentleman? What, because he drinks tea in a morning! I think myself as good a gentleman as he is; and can spend a guinea, where he cannot spend six-pence, I'll answer for it.

Joyce. Yes! very likely, Mr. Jethro: but then Mr. John carries himself so gentle, puts out his foot, and stands with his arm a-kimbo like any captain! (*She puts herself in that attitude.*)

Jethro. Well, we have enough to do, without prating about Mr. John.—If Tom is to go, let him make haste back again, and clean the knives for supper.

Joyce. Why, Miss says there is to be no supper: They never had any at Sir William Merryden's, only a cold *collection* for the quality, that conformed to see the play.

Jethro. Well; Master has order'd the cook to get three barn-door fowls, and a cold ham, and a hot apple-pye well butter'd, for our quality, which Master says they will like better than Lady Merryden's *light* supper of wax-candles and whip-syllabubs. But I must

go and prepare things; and Tom, you make haste back again. I wish this hurly-burly was over: it may well be called an *uproar*; for it will turn our house upside down, I am sure— [Exit after Tom.

Joyce, sola. “Waiting-maid!” indeed! To be sure, I wait upon Miss Letty, at present—but young Mr. Merryden says I am as handsome as somebody else—I shan’t name names—and calls me *his* little *Jocosa*!* And I hope I *shall* be *his* in a few hours, if Parson Jones will do his duty.—

But the young ladies will want me; and the gentlemen will be glad to get rid of their aprons. Jethro little thinks who these *barbers*, as he calls them, are: That Mr. Willoughby is heir to two thousand pounds a-year; and Captain Johnson, I don’t know what fortune he has; but, I am sure, he’s very much of a gentleman, for he gave me half-a-guinea, and said I had very fine hair.

Well; Captain Johnson has disguised himself to steal my young mistress Letitia Longfield, with a *great* fortune; and Mr. Willoughby, to steal Miss Myrtilla Merryden with a very *small* fortune; and Billy Mer-

* The Latin name for Joyce.

ryden gives up his cousin Letitia to steal me, who have no fortune at all. However, if I had Miss Letty's fortune, I need not have taken up with her cast-off lover. But young Merryden would break his heart, if I were to leave him;—and he shan't die for love of me; I never was reckon'd cruel to my lovers; and to my comfort, I have had my share of them.

Scene changes—and discovers WILLOUGHBY and CAPTAIN JOHNSON; one with the curling-irons, and the other with a powdering puff and bag: with which they seem to be finishing the ladies' hair, which JOYCE had really dress'd: young MERRYDEN and young JONES are standing by—JOYCE returning, Miss LONGFIELD chides her for staying so long.

Miss Long. Come, Joyce, where have you been all this time? why do you stay so long?

Joyce. Long! ma'am! I am sure I have not staid a moment after I had done *your* errand; and sent Tom. I have been hurrying all this afternoon about other people's business—

Miss Long. Well; don't be pert, Joyce!

Joyce. Pert! I don't know that I am pert. If a body is in the right, a body does not like to be blamed for nothing.

Will. (aside to Myrtilla.) See the effects of making your servants your confidants!

c

Myrt.

Myrt. Or, rather, see the effects of doing wrong things, Mr. Willoughby; and acting clandestinely.

Will. Poh! clandestinely!

Myrt. Poor girl! she thinks my brother really intends to marry her, I suppose: though we only suffered her to *deceive herself*, to bribe her to secrecy.

Joyce, (*winking on young Merryden.*) Come! Mr. Merryden and Mr. Jones, what do you do here? I must remove these things, and you are only in the way.

[*Exeunt Merryden and Jones.*]

WILLOUGHBY and JOHNSON throw off their aprons, and JOYCE takes the dressing-gowns from the ladies, and retires—WILLOUGHBY and MYRTILLA in the fore part of the stage, and Capt. JOHNSON and LETITIA in the backpart, tête-a-tête.

Will. (*shaking Myrtilla's hand, and offering to salute her.*) Well, my dear Myrtilla, I hope you will now pay your hair-dressers.

Myrt. Oh, Mr. Willoughby! I have been guilty of a most rash, imprudent action: and have a thousand times repented of this serious frolic, since we met last.

Will. Good heaven! what does my dear creature mean?

Myrt. Don't mistake me, Mr. Willoughby; you and I are (or ought to be) at years of discretion: and
I have

I have certainly form'd a very prudent connexion; of which, I trust, I shall never repent——But——

Will. But, what! for heaven's sake, my Myrtilla, a truce with your mental reservations: your promise was absolute, and I have got a special licence——

Myrt. Mr. Willoughby; though your father has for some time been deprived of his intellects by a paralytick stroke, he is yet alive, and *may* recover; and you are not yet exempt from your obedience to him.

Will. My dear Myrtilla! who made *you* such a casuist on a sudden?

Myrt. But, what is of more importance, my uncle Longfield has placed an entire confidence in my discretion: and how can I betray a thoughtless young creature, as you know my cousin Letty is, into an engagement of this magnitude, with a gentleman who is indeed almost a stranger to us, and whom I never saw till he was quarter'd at Leicester, and came once or twice with you to my father's—to see our theatrical performances?

Will. My dear Miss Merryden, have I not told you, repeatedly, that I have known Capt. Johnson, and his connexions, almost these twenty years; that we were school-fellows in Hertfordshire; and that,

to my knowledge, his Uncle will, first or last, amply provide for him?

Myrt. I don't question the truth of your intelligence; but these remote possibilities and settlements in reversion, I am afraid, will not satisfy my uncle Longfield.

Will. Well; we will make his daughter happy, in spite of him. Capt. Johnson is a most worthy character; and will rescue your cousin and your brother from an unnatural union, which you acknowledge to be absolutely detested by both parties. And this connexion with Capt. Johnson, I'll venture my life, will terminate in her complete felicity.

Myrt. Ah! Mr. Willoughby; these hasty matches appear very well, and always end happily in Plays and Romances, because the Author has all the events in his own power; but they are seldom fortunate in real life.

Will. When boys and girls of fifteen, seduced by a transient passion and blinded by appetite, rush into unsuitable engagements, no wonder (when their eyes are open'd, and the illusion vanish'd) that they grow tired of each other, and mutually lament their disappointment. But when——

Myrt.

Myrt. Come, come; I know the conclusion of your discourse—

Will. Well then, I say, that when a sensible woman resigns herself to the honour and affection of a virtuous and sensible man—

Myrt. Such as Mr. Willoughby and Captain Johnson—

Will. (There's a penalty for interrupting a preacher in his function)—with such a man, a woman runs very little risk of being deceived in her warmest expectations: for

“ Of all the various wretches love has made,

“ How few have been by men of sense betray'd!

Captain Johnson, (coming forward with Letitia.)
So, Willoughby, you are a happy fellow; you are spouting heroics; but I must tune my lyre “to elegies of woe.” My Letitia here repents beforehand, and wishes to be off. After we have made preparation for our voyage, her heart fails her; and she is unwilling to venture on so dangerous an ocean.

Will. This is only her virgin timidity. My Myrtilla talks in the same strain; but I'll answer for it, she'll go cheerfully through the world with such a commander as Capt. Johnson.

Letitia. I have no doubt of the skill or the integrity of my conductor; but I cannot set sail (as you call it) without my father's passport.

Capt. Johnf. My dear Miss Longfield, Willoughby and I (with much difficulty) have got the Archbishop's passport—a special licence; and I have a twenty-pound bank-note for Parson Jones; to whom, by your account, such a *douceur* will be irresistible.

Letitia. I don't know that; Mr. Jones is a very good and conscientious man, though he has nothing but his curacy to live upon.

Capt. Johnf. Well; it was the golden-bough that procured the Trojan hero admittance to the Elysian fields; and if my dear Letitia will but consent, I fear no other obstacle to my more than Elysian happiness.

Letitia. Ah! these are fine poetical flights; but I never can nor will disobey so good a father, or take such a step without his consent.

Enter JOYCE and young MERRYDEN, in a great hurry.

Joyce. Come, Miss Letty, I wonder you make people wait so! The Company is come, and all has been ready this half-hour?

Myrt. (aside to Willoughby.) So, so: Mrs. Joyce anticipates her exaltation; and assumes airs of superiority.

Billy

Billy Merryden. Come, Myrtilla; we only wait for you and my cousin.—I have told my uncle, that these gentlemen hair-dressers desire to stay and see the opera.

Joyce. Yes; and I'll dispose of them along with Parson Jones and his wife in my old Lady's closet on the stair-case; which has a lattice window that looks into the hall: and then, you know, we can settle the affair with Parson Jones.

Letitia. Pray don't you trouble yourself about that, mind your own business!

Joyce, (turning aside with contempt.) That's my own business, as well as your's.

Billy Mer. Well, come along; the company has all been seated this quarter of an hour.—And there's Mrs. Goldwire, as fine as my Lady Mayorefs; and Miss Goldwire dress'd like an angel, with a thousand pounds worth of jewels on: I am in love with her already.

Letitia. Is Mr. Short's family come?

Billy Mer. Yes, there's the Justice and his rosy Spouse; and the accomplish'd Miss Betsey Short. Well, Willoughby, you and Capt. Johnson must shift for yourselves as well as you can. Adieu!

Letitia. Joyce, you go and ask Mr. and Mrs. Jones, whether they will like to sit amongst the company.

Joyce.

Joyce. No, they are in a dishabille, and don't chuse it.

Myrt. (to the gentlemen.) Well, you go up to your balcony, and criticise.—Adieu! [*Exeunt.*

(*Manent Capt. JOHNSON and WILLOUGHBY.*)

Capt. Johnf. Who, the devil! can this Goldwire be? It is certainly my Cheapside acquaintance.

Will. No, no; here are none but Longfield's country neighbours, you may be sure. I have seen Justice Short at our sessions; he's a very harmless animal, I assure you. He *says* little, and means less.

Capt. Johnf. Well, if my friend Goldwire is here, (as I shrewdly suspect) he says a great deal, and means *nothing*. And, by the mother's finery and the daughter's jewels, it must be they—and I heard they had made a purchase some where in the country. Every thing militates against our inauspicious plot.

The scene changes, and discovers the audience: Mr. Mrs. and Miss GOLDWIRE, Justice SHORT, his wife and daughter, with other spectators.

LONGFIELD comes and takes his place.

Long. Well, Gentlemen and Ladies, our young people are ready. 'Tis a whim of Miss Merryden's and my daughter's, and I love to let people amuse themselves in an innocent way. I hope Mr. and Mrs.
Goldwire

Goldwire will make allowances: you must not expect your Maras, your Sestinis, or any of those ladies that make such a noise in the newspapers.

Goldwire. Oh! Sir, I have not a doubt that young Ladies of Miss Longfield's and Miss Merryden's accomplishments will perform to admiration.

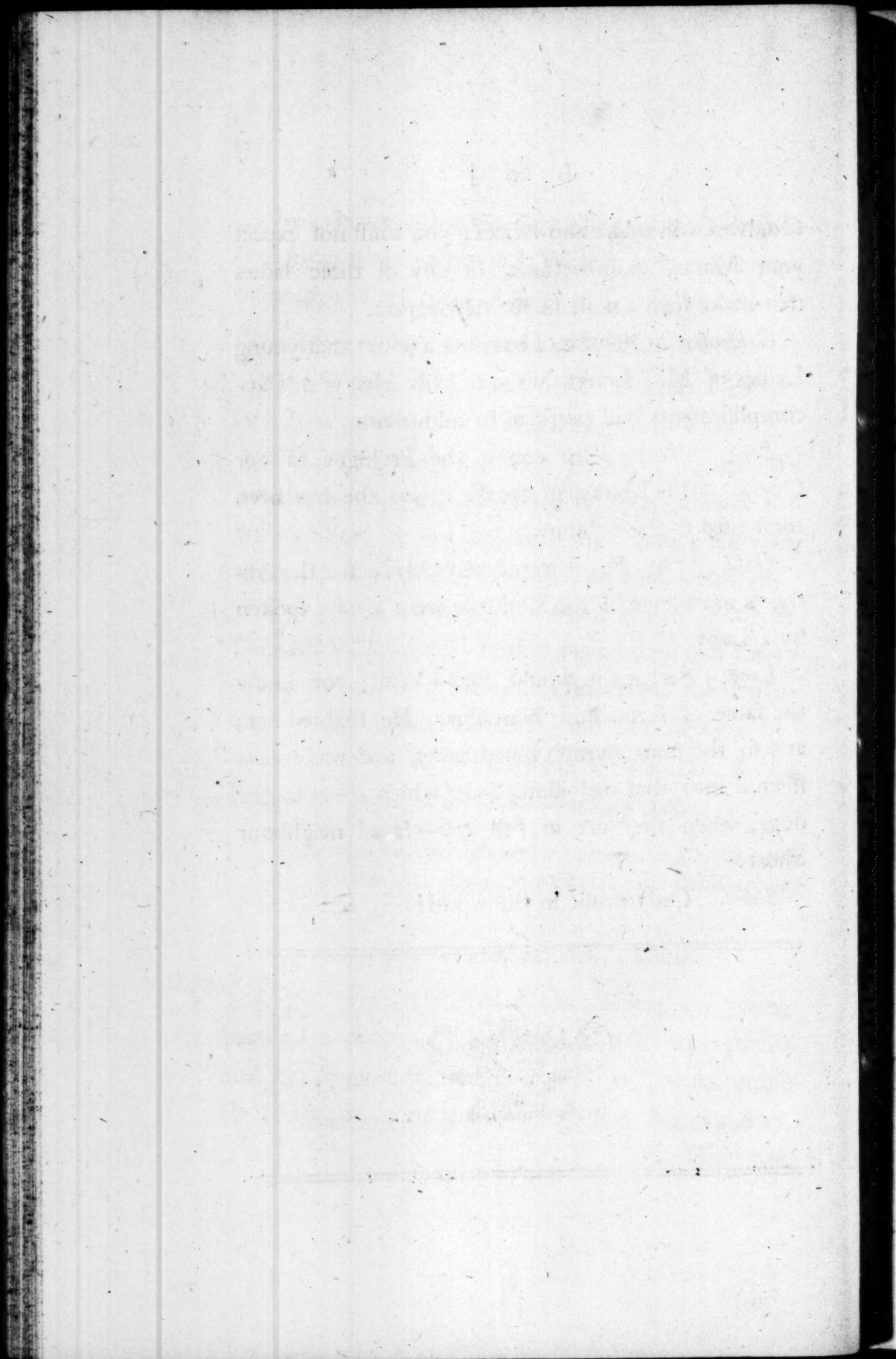
Long. Well; here comes the Prologue to our Opera. Miss Merryden speaks it, as she has been most used to these things.

Gold. Why, Sir, it would probably be for the Author's advantage, if the Prologue were always spoken by a Lady.

Long. Perhaps it would, Sir.—Well; you know the fable of Echo and Narcissus. He slighted her; and so the poor nymph pined away, and was transform'd into that melodious *sound* which *echoes* to our dogs, when they are in full cry—Hea! neighbour Short?

Short. Only music in the world!





PROLOGUE*

TO THE OPERA OF

ECHO AND NARCISSUS.

SPOKEN BY

MYRTILLA MERRIDEN,

IN THE

CHARACTER OF LARISSA.

A MIDST this brilliant circle, should there be one
Who ne'er has read a book call'd Tooke's Pantheon;
Or Ovid's works—(not Ovid's Art of Love,
But that which sings the amorous pranks of Jove,
And various changes† wrought by heavenly pow'rs;
Men turn'd to beasts, or boys to birds and flowers)
Know, such—that Echo was a rural maid,
A nymph who Juno's love-intrigues betray'd,
And thence was justly doom'd, though fair and young,
To lose the native freedom of *her* tongue.
Yet, speak to her, she'd let her voice be heard;
Nay, get, like any vixen, the last word.

* Never before published.

† Ovid's Metamorphoses.

This Nymph had set her fancy on a swain
Narcissus call'd, the *beauty* of the plain.
Narcissus was a youth (yet more uncommon!)
So fair himself—he scorn'd a pretty woman.
Nay: should we make advances, this Narcissus
Would flirt away, and still refuse to kiss us.
The slighted Echo, with resentment fir'd,
To hide her shame, 'midst woods and rocks retir'd;
The babbling Nymph, there dwindled to a sound,
At length a period to her sorrows found.

The Youth by chance, when weary'd with the chase,
In a clear fountain view'd his pretty face.
Enamour'd of himself, to love a prey,
He too, like slighted Echo, pined away.

Such, gentry, is to-night our bill of fare——
To please each soft Narcissus we despair;
But would our noble British Youth aspire
To emulate the gallantry and fire,
The generous candour, which the breast refines
Of youthful George, and in each action shines,
They sure would kind to our fond passion prove,
Nor let one tender Virgin die for love.
Yet all our love to-night, is—love of fame—
And your applause will ratify our claim.



ECHO AND NARCISSUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A FOREST, or SYLVAN PROSPECT.

RECITATIVE.

Narcissus.

SEE, from the East, the radiant source of light
Dispels the dewy vapours of the night;
Nature looks gay, and with a blooming face
Smiles on th' approaching pleasures of the chace.

Arcas. REC.

Our loitering friends, in sleep's soft fetters bound,
Wait till our labours by success are crown'd:
Haste! haste! ye sluggards; to the field repair!
Our sports partake, and in our raptures share!

AIR.

AIR.

All nature looks gay;
 To the woods hark away!
 Rouse the stag from the echoing grove:
 Urge the chace while 'tis light!
 Give to Venus the night,
 And the ravishing pleasures of love!

Narcissus.

Hold, hold! thy rash tongue,
 Nor pollute the chaste song
 With the name of that amorous queen:
 Pay Diana thy vows,
 That the stag she may rouse
 From the woods and the forests so green.

Arcas, (listening.)

Our vows they are hear'd,
 The stag has appear'd,
 Hark! hark! to the sound of the horn:

[*Horn at a distance.*]

Come! away to your speed,
 See! the hounds in full speed
 Brush off the fresh dews of the morn.

Both.

Both.

O'er hills and wild woods,
Thro' vallies and floods,
We'll enjoy the melodious cry:
We'll pursue the fleet hounds,
Give the stag his death-wounds,
And see the poor wanderer die.

SCENE II.

(*ECHO appears as they go off—and repeats the last line.*)

Echo.

“And see the poor wanderer die.”

RECITATIVE.

Must I for ever wander thus alone,
And make to solitary rocks my moan?
Still from my sight the lovely hunter flies;
Nor e'er regards the *language* of my eyes.—
For oh! stern fate forbids me to impart
In tender words the torments of my heart.
Thus Juno on my tongue her vengeance wreaks,
Condemn'd to silence, till my lover speaks:
And, when I would disclose my amorous pain,
My lips are dumb; my cheeks warm blushes stain.

AIR.

AIR.

My Love is like Apollo fair;
 Like two bright stars his sparkling eyes:
 In his flush'd cheeks and flowing hair,
 The God of Love in ambush lies.
 But, while I burn, with love oppress'd,
 Stern Winter's frost has chill'd his breast.

While he o'er hills and distant woods
 Heedless pursues the flying deer;
 I haunt these lonely rocks and floods,
 And pine in hopeless torments here.
 My tongue is silent; but too plain
 The crimson blushes speak my pain.

She retires on the approach of PENEUS and LARISSA.

SCENE III.

Peneus. REC.

Why courts our Echo thus the Sylvan shade;
 See on her languid cheek the roses fade.
 All day she sighs, the lonely woods among;
 All night repeats sad Philomela's song.

Some

Some secret anguish, in her breast confin'd,
Disturbs her peace, and preys upon her mind.

Lariffa. REC.

Romantick girl! she haunts the silent grove,
Nor knows that solitude's the nurse of love:
She for Narcissus pines—that haughty swain
Who scorns the fairest nymphs that tread the plain.

Peneus. AIR.

If once the poor nymph has got love in her head,
'Tis time, my Lariffa, our daughter to wed:
She may prove a fond loving wife:
Yet, we'll stay if we can
'Till we find out the man
That will make her quite happy for life.

Lariffa.

Indeed, my dear jewel, a daughter of mine
Should rather, neglected, in solitude pine,
Than marry before she's of age:
I'll keep the fond slut
In some cottage or hut,
Pent up, like a bird in a cage.

D

Peneus.

Peneus.

Alas! you're mistaken, indeed, my dear life!

And talk like a foolish, fantastical wife:

She'll never confinement endure:

Let her frisk it about

At each pastoral rout,

Variety 'll soon work a cure.

DUET.

Well; if she's in love, as most girls have been,

(For love in a girl's but a venial sin)

A mother should not be unkind:

She's now in her prime;

Yet all in good time;

She must wait—'till *the man's in the mind.*

[*Exeunt.*

At the end of the first act of the Opera,

Gold. (cries.) Bravo! bravo! upon my word, admirably performed!

Mrs. Gold. Yes, really, not bad; the young ladies only want a little of our London polish. I wish they could hear one of our city concerts, at ——— hall.

They

They would sing with better spirit—it would give them more *assurance*.

Miss Gold. Really, mama! I don't think the young ladies at all deficient in that particular—do you think they are, Miss Short?

Miss Short. Why, I don't know; papa says, I sing as well as Miss Longfield; and I am sure I should tremble like an *aspen* leaf, if I were to sing before such a company.

Mrs. Sh. O! fye! Betsey; why you learn'd to sing and play upon the spinnet two years at Birmingham school—and it cost almost twenty pounds.

Just. Sh. More than my huntsman's wages.

Mrs. Sh. Come, Betsey, don't be afraid: we are all neighbours—you shall sing us a song between the acts—give us 'the Sparrow and the Dove;' you sing very prettily.

Betsey. O! dear mama! you know I have got such a cold—*hem!* but I'll try to oblige the company.

[*Sings.*

After Miss Betsey has sung,

Gold. (again.) Bravo! bravo! Upon my word, Miss Short would have performed a part very well in the opera.

Miss Gold. Yes; I don't think Miss Short at all inferior to any of them.

Miss Sh. O! dear Miss Goldwire—you only jokes.

Miss Gold. Lord! what a charming youth that Narcissus is!

Miss Sh. Yes; that's Sir William Merryden's son; but he's engaged to his cousin, Miss Longfield.

Miss Gold. O! dear ma'am, I have nothing to do with his engagements; I only say he's a very *pleasing* young man.

Gold.—to Justice Short. Well, sir, I hope you have been agreeably amused.

Just. Sh. Good hunting song—Longfield and I—old sportsmen—unwilling to disoblige him—but don't know what to say to it—young people acting plays—forward enough—this age—my opinion.

Gold. I perfectly understand you, sir—you and Mr. Longfield are old acquaintance, (you would say) and you were unwilling to disoblige him; otherwise, you do not greatly approve of young people's acting plays, as they are forward enough, in this age, without it.

Short. You take my meaning. That's the purport of my discourse.

Gold. But, sir, young people *must* have their amusements: the mind must be occasionally relaxed:
if

if the bow be continually bent, it loses its elasticity, and becomes entirely useless.

Short. Don't know what to say to it: his majesty—the honour—commission—these interludes.

Gold. I perfectly comprehend you, sir—you would say, that, his Majesty having done you the honour to put you in the commission of the peace, you apprehend, it does not become a magistrate to countenance these *interludes*, as, I think, they are denominated by the statute.

Short. That's the upshot of the matter.

Gold. But, give me leave to observe, sir, that, under proper regulation, the familiar intercourse between young people of different sexes rubs off the rusticity which we naturally contract in retirement; cultivates the social affections—and promotes good neighbourhood—and——

Enter LONGFIELD, (who had gone out to give orders) with JETHRO bringing an old-fashioned salver with glasses of wine jingling, and Tom following with a plate of biscuits, &c. which puts a stop to Mr. GOLDWIRE's sentimental harangue.

End of the First Act of the Comic Part.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE II. of the Comic Part.

The dressing-room, WILLOUGHBY and Capt. JOHNSON, having discovered GOLDWIRE to be his old acquaintance.

Capt. Johnf. So, we shall be blown up in an instant. What, the devil! must be done?

Will. Come, don't despair; it *may* prove a fortunate circumstance, as you say Goldwire is acquainted with your uncle, and knows his intentions in your favour.

Capt. Johnf. Ah! Goldwire is a good-natured fellow. Let him but sport his sentimental apothegms, and say fine things upon the occasion, he would probably do me justice: but the mother and daughter will play the devil with me: they are so provoked at my refusing the little blighted thing, they'll never forgive me, but say every thing, true or false, that their spleen can suggest.

Will. Well; we'll get Parson Jones down, after the next act, and settle the affair with him, and secure the girls; and then bid the whole world defiance. But, I would not say a word to Miss Merryden or Miss Longfield of the discovery; it will only alarm them to no purpose.

Enter

Enter MYRTILLA, LETITIA, and young MERRYDEN.

Myrt. Why did you send that impertinent Joyce after us? It will cause speculation.

Will. Send Joyce! my dear Miss Merryden, we did not send her: tho' I long'd to see you, to tell you how divinely you sing and how charmingly you look.

Capt. Johnf. And to assure you both, that we are all impatience till we are indissolubly united in the flowery bands of Hymen.

Will. And, in order to that, we will get Parson Jones here alone, after the next act; and settle the plan by his direction.

Myrt. Oh! for heaven's sake, Mr. Willoughby, do not precipitate the affair in this rash manner.

Letitia. Oh! pray let it be deferred, till some step can be taken to break it to my father, and get his consent—I cannot disobey him: he has never denied me any thing in his life; and I could not live under the sense of his displeasure.

Enter JOYCE, in a bold, hurrying manner.

Joyce. Come! Miss Letty, the music waits; what makes you keep young Mr. Merryden here?

Letitia. Why did you send us here at all? nobody ordered you.

Capt.

Capt. Johnf. Mrs. Joyce acted from her own feelings.

Letitia. From her own impertinence—well, adieu!

Joyce. Impertinence! [*Exeunt.*

Capt. Johnf. Sweet girl! why was not the superiority of fortune ten thousand fold on my side? how can I tempt such a good creature, to violate her duty to her father?

Will. Prithee, Johnson, don't be so scrupulous. No one has a higher notion of filial duty than I have; yet, I think myself justified, in acting without my father's consent in this affair.

Capt. Johnf. Your father is incapable either of giving or refusing his consent. Besides, when in health, he was always teasing you to marry, without limiting you in your choice.

Will. Why, Miss Longfield's case and mine are nearly similar. My father's intellects are impaired by a paralytic stroke: Miss Longfield's father is infatuated by an absurd passion for keeping his money in his own family; and has therefore projected an unnatural union between his daughter and his sister's son, who is to take his name and inherit his fortune.

Capt. Johnf. Well, if he would give me his amiable daughter, I would *take his name*, even without inheriting his *fortune*.

Will. You are more gallant than young Delville in the novel of Cecilia,* who gave up an hundred thousand pounds, rather than take his mistress's name.

Capt. Johnf. That was family pride—to some purpose.

Will. Well, but we must contrive to have a private conference with this matrimonial operator; that we may get our business done as soon as the opera is over.

Capt. Johnf. Ah! Willoughby! I shall never think our *business* completely done, 'till we are safe in the arms of our lovely girls.

How long's the shortest moment of delay
To hearts impatient of their pangs like mine!

[*Exeunt.*

* Just then published by the ingenious Miss Burney.



ECHO and NARCISSUS.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter PAN pursuing ECHO.

RECITATIVE.

Pan.

Ah! fly me not, fair maid; thy fears dismiss!
 One look vouchsafe me—if deny'd a kiss.
 Ah! why to me so cruel and so coy;
 Why vainly court'st thou that fastidious boy?
 Think not the youth thy passion will requite,
 Whose own fair features are his sole delight.
 Slight not my vows; lord of this fertile plain,
 These woods, these flocks, these numerous herds, I
 reign.

Come, dwell with me, reward my ardent love,
 Reign thou the sovereign mistress of the grove.

AIR.

Dear Echo! forbear
 To sigh and despair,
 From the haughty Narcissus, ah! fly;

Come

Come dwell in these rocks,
Partake of my flocks,
And the fruits which my gardens supply.

The hills all around
With my reed shall resound,
While I warble the pastoral lay:
My passion requite;
We'll love the long night,
And in pleasure we'll spend the long day.

The gay mortal youth,
Tho' he boast of his truth,
Too often inconstant he proves:
Then come to my arms,
Resign your bright charms,
And try how a demi-god loves.

ECHO repeats the last line contemptuously.

And try how a demi-god loves !

Echo. REC.

Hence! hence! nor on my privacy intrude;
Nor dare disturb my darling solitude.
Narcissus flies, but let me still pursue;
Though he is cruel, Echo will be true.

Pan.

Pan.

Ah! scorn the swain, to such bright beauties blind,
And smile on Pan, who ever will be kind.

AIR.

Echo.

Ah! talk not of your odious love,
Nor think I'll e'er inconstant prove,
Or quit this lonely shade:
I love one dear, tho' cruel boy;
And, if I can't his love enjoy,
I'll live and die—a maid.

ECHO retires behind the scenes.

SCENE II.

Enter NARCISSUS, fatigued from the chase.

Narcissus. REC.

Ye verdant woods! chaste Dian's lov'd retreat,
Shade me, O! shade me from the scorching heat.
Here let me rest, and view our slaughtered spoil,
Then, with fresh life, resume the pleasing toil:
Hither,

Hither, my comrades, to this fount repair;
And shun the noontide heat and blasting air,
Hither come; O! let us meet
In this lovely, cool retreat.

ECHO (*behind the scenes*) repeats,

"Hither come; O! let us meet
"In this lovely, cool retreat."

Narcissus.

Beneath the poplar shade.

Echo.

"Beneath the poplar shade."

Narcissus.

Hot and weary from the chace,
Come to this sequester'd place.

Echo.

"Hot and weary from the chace,
"Come to this sequester'd place."

Narcissus.

Where in soft repose I'm laid.

Echo.

"Where in soft repose I'm laid."

Narcissus.

Narcissus.

Hail, ye cool refreshing rills,
Gently trickling down the hills.

Echo.

"Hail, ye cool refreshing rills,
"Gently trickling down the hills."

Narcissus.

Pour'd from the Naiads' copious urn.

Echo.

"Pour'd from the Naiads' copious urn."

Narcissus.

And thou gentle, fragrant breeze,
Breathing through the quivering trees.

Echo.

"And thou gentle, fragrant breeze,
"Breathing through the quivering trees."

Narcissus.

O! soothe the heat with which I burn.

Echo.

"O soothe the heat with which I burn."

ECHO,

ECHO, *frantic with love, rushes from her retreat, and runs to embrace NARCISSUS; who starts up and retires.*

AIR.

Narcissus.

What means the frantic maid? reserve thy charms
For some more amorous youth's deserving arms:
Devoted to the pleasures of the field,
I'll ne'er to wanton love's soft empire yield.

[*A horn.*

But, hark! my comrades chide my long delay;
And the shrill *horn* has summon'd me away.—

[*Exit.*

Echo, alone.

Fly! fly, insensate youth! reserve thy charms
For some more happy rival's envied arms;
Yet, know! *thou* too shalt love, relentless boy;
And sigh for charms, which thou shalt ne'er enjoy.

[*Retires again to the side of the stage.*

But hail, ye woods! beneath your gloomy shade
Again receive a love-sick, hapless maid,
Who'll hide her blushes from each mortal eye,
And here, in ceaseless anguish, pine and die.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter

Re-enter NARCISSUS with his Companions.

Go, Echo; learn thy passion to subdue,
Nor think me cruel, though not kind to you.
The forward nymph our love can ne'er obtain;
The snare, that's spread in fight, is spread in vain.

Chorus of Sportsmen.

Young Cupid, avaunt! presume not to haunt,
With sportsmen, the shades of the grove :
While our game we pursue, we have pleasures in view
More sweet than the raptures of love.

[Exeunt omnes.]

*As soon as the second act of the Opera is over, Mr. LONGFIELD
exclaims,*

Long. Ah! Mr. William Merryden! you must not
play Narcissus, if you expect to marry a fortune.

Gold. No, sir; for as the poet observes,

“ Women, born to be controul'd,

“ Stoop to the forward and the bold.”

Long. Why, you must know, Mr. Goldwire, (for
I make no secret of it) I have adopted that young
man; and intend he shall take my name, and marry
my daughter.

Fust.

Just. Short. Sister's children—too near a-kin—
'twon't prosper.

Gold. Those are precisely my sentiments of the matter, Mr. Short;—for, in your own way, unless you cross the breed of your dogs, the species will degenerate, you know.

Just. Short. Beggar's curs, and sheep-biters!

Long. That's all accidental. I have known several instances, where such matches have turn'd out very happily.

Miss Gold. (*aside to Miss Short.*) The young lady seems to have no objection to the alliance. And indeed I cannot blame her; for Narcissus is a charming youth! and is only too modest for the nymph.

Miss Sh. Oh! that's only in jest, you know. It is so in the play-book. But they are to be married very soon.

Miss Gold. Well; it does not concern me, but I should think no young man could like such forward girls—such advances must disgust any man of the least delicacy.

Miss Sh. I own, it's what *I* could not do—but Miss Longfield, to be sure, is very young.

Scene changes to the dressing-room.

E

(*Capt.*

(*Capt. JOHNSON and WILLOUGHBY, having mentioned the affair to Parson JONES, who refuses to marry them*)

Capt. Johnf. So; there's an end of our hopeful project.

Will. What reason did the doctor give? I believe the minister of a parish cannot refuse to do his office, when a proper licence is produced.

Capt. Johnf. Why, he said, (what I suspect to be true) that my friend at Doctor's Commons must have made use of some false allegations to obtain a special licence, where one of the parties was under age—for that would certainly defeat the end proposed by the marriage act.

Will. Did you try to silence his scruples with your bank-note?

Capt. Johnf. Yes; and he said very honestly, that twenty guineas was no contemptible object to a person in his situation. But that no consideration should bribe him to do a dishonourable action, or to *connive* at such an injury, intended against so good a friend as Mr. Longfield.

Will. *Connive* at it!—why, then, depend upon it, he will betray us to the old gentleman—so that we have no resource but to prevail on the young ladies to elope with us this instant.

Capt.

Capt. Johnf. Ah! I see plainly, that will be impossible; besides, I have another project, which occurred to me the moment I was convinced of the danger of being discovered by Goldwire and his family.

Will. Well, and what is your project?

Capt. Johnf. Why, as I was afraid (by Myrtille's account) Parson Jones might prove unmanageable; as we had nothing else for it, I instantly determined to make a bold push, though I should risk every thing. I'll put on my regimentals, and *you*, your green and gold, which we brought for the opera—go up undauntedly to Mr. Longfield, and demand his daughter in marriage.

Will. That will be “a bold stroke for a wife” with a vengeance.

Capt. Johnf. The old gentleman will be outrageous at first. But if Goldwire will be generous enough to vouch for my character, and to acquaint Mr. Longfield with my uncle's intentions in my favour, (which Goldwire knows better than any one) perhaps the old gentleman may be softened by degrees, and give his consent—especially when he finds the young people absolutely averse to his own plan.

Will. That will be the great objection—the defeating his project of keeping the fortune in his own
E 2
famil

family. But young Merryden must be explicit, and boldly protest against marrying so near a relation.

Capt. Johnf. But how will this affect your interest?

Will. Never regard me: as I think I am secure of Miss Merryden's affection, I am not afraid of any obstacle from Sir William and Lady Merryden; and indeed, have only adopted this clandestine method, as you know, to promote your success with Miss Longfield; and to avoid the formality of a publick solemnity; which might not be so proper in my father's situation.

Capt. Johnf. I am thoroughly sensible of your generosity on this occasion.

Enter Young MERRYDEN.

Merryden. Well; how do you go on? what says the reverend doctor?

Will. Why, we are all aground; I am afraid our plan is entirely disconcerted; Jones will not perform the ceremony: and more than that, I am afraid, he will betray us to your uncle.

Merryden. No, no; Jones has more honour than that comes to.

Capt. Johnf. Why, that's the very thing which alarms us. We are entirely strangers to him; and he

he thinks himself bound in *honour* to defeat a plot, evidently formed against his old friend Mr. Longfield.

Merryden. Well, don't be discouraged, fortune favours the bold. I'll do *my* part, and prepare the way for you, by rejecting my dear cousin Letitia as earnestly as Narcissus did Echo.

Enter Mrs. JOYCE.

Joyce. Come, Mr. Merryden; they are waiting for you to begin the last act.

Mer. Ah! my little Jocosa! you mean, the last act but one—matrimony, you know, is to be the last act.

Will. No; *consummation* is the last act, Mrs. Joyce.

Joyce. La! Mr. Willoughby; how you talks! 'Tis time enough to talk of *matrimony*, when the play is over.

Capt. Johnf. Yes, Mrs. Joyce, that's "a *consummation* devoutly to be wished" by you and me. But I am afraid it will be too soon to talk of matrimony, when the play *is* over.

Mer. Yes, Parson Jones is a renegade and a traitor; and not only refuses to marry us, but will betray us to my uncle.

Joyce. Refuse to marry us! oh! he dares not, if Miss Letty lays her commands upon him.

Capt. Johns. Ah! Mrs. Joyce; I am afraid Miss Letty and he are agreed to disappoint us.

Merryden. Well; I must go and perform my part.
[*Exit.*

WILLOUGHBY and JOHNSON exeunt on the other side.

Joyce, sola. Ah! Mr. Billy Merryden; are you so cool about it? So then, I shall lose my husband and my place too, I suppose. I believe it was a sham licence that young Merryden shewed me. But I don't care, I'll give him tit for tat! Mr. John, Goldwire's butler, has promised to get me a better service in London—and, if I lose this foolish boy, I may get a man in his place. And

This shall be my maxim still,
If one man won't, another will!

[*Exit.*

End of the Second Act of the Comic Part.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I. of the Opera.

*Shepherd and Shepherdesses advance, dancing to pastoral musick.**

Chorus of Shepherds.

Sweet the joys the happy lover
Tastes beneath the beech's shade,
When his daily toil is over,
With some tender blushing maid.

Mutual love's the greatest blessing
Heaven on mortals can bestow:
Naught beside is worth possessing,
Midst this vale of tears below.

Chorus of Shepherdesses.

Cease, ye swains, your amorous ditty,
Teach the reed a pensive strain;
Lovely Echo claims your pity,
Who no longer cheers the plain.

On some lonely rock reclining,
Still she bids adieu to joy;
Still with secret grief repining
For that haughty, senseless boy.

* Added since the first edition of the Opera.

Grand Chorus.

Barbarous swain! who secret anguish
Can with wanton pride impart,
Can behold a virgin languish,
Sporting with her love-sick heart.

Him, let every beauteous maiden,
Him, let every constant swain,
With poor Echo's fate upbraiding,
Banish from th' Arcadian plain.

Peneus and Larissa.

DUET.

Where shall we our wretched Echo find?
Long has the nymph in fruitless sorrow pin'd:
And now by some rash act of sad despair
Ended, at once, her life and torturing care.

Enter Pan.

REC.

As late at even I watch'd my nibbling flock,
And tun'd my pipe beneath yon hoary rock,
I heard fair Echo's voice, with glad surprise
Flew to the place, and search'd with longing eyes,

But

But found her not—by chance there cros'd the plain,
Some heavenly power, who cried, Thy search is vain;
Echo is gone; thy fruitless love give o'er;
Her voice you'll hear—but never see her more.

Lariffa.

AIR.

Oh! my lost child! thou pride of all the grove,
Thou early victim of an ill-placed love:
O! my lost child! thy parents' sole delight,
What envious fate has snatch'd thee from our sight?

Peneus.

Shall then no more our lovely maid return,
But leave us thus in fruitless grief to mourn?
Unkind Narcissus! Thou, too, cruel swain,
Some haughty fair shalt love—and love in vain.

Pan.

Ah, luckless maid! that could her thoughts employ
To court the smiles of that capricious boy—
A senseless fop! who, for his own dear charms,
Could spurn the lovely Echo from his arms.

Pan,

Pan, Peneus, Larissa.

TRIO.

Oh! my lost { love } thou pride of all the grove,
 { child }

Thou early victim of an ill-plac'd love!

Oh! my lost { love } thy faithful Pan's delight!
 { child } thy parents' sole delight!

What envious fate has snatch'd thee from our sight?

CHORUS.

Ye nymphs, that now are in your prime,
Your passions learn to check in time,
Or soon they'll too imperious prove,
When once inflam'd by youthful love.

Poor Echo let a thoughtless boy
Her gentle peace of mind destroy,
And thus in bloom of beauty's pride
The nymph, though not unpitied, died.

Echo, though invisible, repeats,

——not unpitied died.

*The Chorus start with surprise—but ECHO, still invisible,
proceeds,*

Echo

Echo.

REC.

Mourn not, my friends, the love-lorn Echo's fate;
I still survive, and in a happier state,
In kind compassion to my flighted love,
The Cyprian Queen, within this hallow'd grove,
Protects me from the fatal stroke of death,
And grants me still the vocal power of breath.
Amid' the rocks, conceal'd from mortal eyes,
I hear the lover's moan, the hunter's cries.

AIR.

And each revolving morn, I still rejoice,
To echo back my lov'd Narcissus' voice:
Contented thus in solitude, I dwell——

Peneus, Larissa, Pan, and Chorus.

Farewell, then, gentle Echo! ah! farewell.

Echo repeats,

“Farewell!”

SCENE

SCENE III.

Enter Arcas.

RECITATIVE.

Arcas.

Ill-fated youth! to quit the nobler chace,
And fall a victim to thy blooming face.
The young Narcissus, insolent and vain,
Who scorn'd the fairest nymphs that haunt the plain,
And spurn'd the lovely Echo from his arms,
Now languishes for visionary charms,
Stretch'd on the fountain's brink and matted grass,
Views his own shadow in the wat'ry glass.
Nor can regard to health, to sleep, or food,
Drag him a moment from the crystal flood,
Where, in a dream of bliss, the idiot lies,
And, for his own dear image, pines and dies.

All.

The Gods are just, and wisely thus requite
The pride which every female charm could flight.

Grand

Grand Chorus.

Hence, ye haughty swains, beware
How you slight the modest fair ;
Whose unwary, artless breast
Is by virtuous love possess'd.
Shun the harlot's lewd embraces,
Their treacherous smiles, and wanton graces—

But the self-admiring youth,
Deaf to innocence and truth,
Whose whole thoughts himself employs,
Who contemns chaste Hymen's joys,
Soon or late shall vengeance prove
For beauty scorn'd and slighted love.

End of the Opera.



ACT

ACT III. of the Comick Part.

Towards the conclusion of the Opera, a servant enters, and whispers LONGFIELD, who is beating time to the Chorus : as soon as it is over, he goes out ; and Parson JONES having discovered Capt. JOHNSON's design upon his daughter—he re-enters in great wrath.

Long. Thieves ! robbers ! house-breakers ! Letitia ! Myrtilla ! where are the perfidious fluts ? To run away with two hair-dressers ! Jethro ! Abraham ! bring the blunderbuss, and secure the rascals, and bring them before Justice Short this moment, and take care they do not escape.

Enter WILLOUGHBY and Capt. JOHNSON ; the former in green and gold ; the latter in his regimentals, followed by JETHRO with a blunderbuss, ABRAHAM with a pitchfork, and TOM with a kitchen poker, &c.

Tom. } Here they be—they were going to escape
Jethro. } out at the parlour window.

Will. Yes, sir, here we are ; but we had no thoughts of making our escape.

Capt. Johnf. No, sir, we came voluntarily to surrender ourselves.

Long.

Long. Who are *you*, fir? what do you want here?

Capt. Johnf. This gentleman's family, fir, (pointing to Willoughby) is not unknown to you. And Mr. Goldwire will inform you, fir, who I am.

Miss Gold. (in great agitation, aside to her mother.) Heavens! what can this mean! what does Johnson do here?—Pray mama let us go out a little! I cannot bear the sight of him. [Exeunt.

Long. (in answer to *Capt. Johnson.*) Well, fir, I don't care who you are; I have business of more consequence on my hands; where are these rascally hair-dressers?

Will. Sir, we are the hair-dressers, and have disguised ourselves as such, in order to accomplish a scheme, which, when you are better informed, I flatter myself, you will not entirely disapprove of.

Long. If your intentions were honourable, you would have no need of any disguise.

Will. Our intentions, fir, are perfectly honourable, and I have the happiness to be indissolubly engaged to Miss Myrtilia Merryden!

Long. You engaged to Miss Merryden.

Will. Yes, fir; and this gentleman, *Capt. Johnson*, an officer who has distinguished himself against
the

the enemies of his King and country, has been happy enough to engage the affections of Miss Longfield.

Long. It's a lie, Sir!—Miss Longfield's affections have been engaged to her cousin, from her infancy; and she shall marry him to-morrow, if I please. She has been contracted to him these seven years.

Will. Sir, I believe Mr. William Merryden by no means considers himself under that predicament.

Long. And, sir, too! I believe Mr. William Merryden will not refuse my daughter with 30,000*l*.

Capt. Johnf. If Mr. Merryden, sir, had not assured me that he was quite averse to an union with so near a relation, (though I was enamoured of Miss Longfield, before I knew who she was, or what were her expectations) I never would have thwarted a plan, which (I have since been told) you had adopted, for disposing of your daughter.

Long. Sir, you seem to know more of my family affairs than (I am sure) is true. Here! where are my daughter and my nephew? send them hither.

MERRYDEN and Miss LONGFIELD enter immediately from behind the scenes.

Long. What, sir, have you made this gentleman in his red coat your confidant, and assured him that you have any dislike to my daughter?

Merryden.

Mer. Miss Longfield and I have been bred up together, you know, sir, almost from the nursery; and I have the utmost regard and affection for my amiable cousin.

Long. (to Capt. Johnson.) There, sir! you have from his own mouth your bold assertion contradicted.

Mer. Yes, sir, as a relation, I have all the affection and esteem for Miss Longfield which her merit so justly claims; but should almost feel the same reluctance to marry my cousin, as I should my own sister.

Just. Sh. Young man's in the right—cannot blame him.

Gold. 'Tis natural, sir, for young people to consult their own gratification, more than that of their parents.

Long. (to Miss Longfield.) Well, Madam, and have you dared to engage your affections elsewhere, without my permission?

Will. Miss Longfield, I'll venture to say, sir, has engaged her affections to a gentleman, not less worthy of her, than her cousin would have been. That gentleman (*pointing to Goldwire*) will do justice to his merit.

Long. And pray who are you, sir? I don't doubt, but you will vouch for your accomplice in this affair.

Will. Sir, my name is Willoughby; and I am ambitious of becoming your nephew, by an union with Miss Merryden.

Long. Willoughby! (*looking earnestly at him*) what, sir, are you son to Mr. Willoughby of Highgrove?

Will. Consult your nephew and niece, sir, whether I am or not.

Long. Nay, I'll consult no one but your countenance—for, though I have been long afflicted with the gout, and have not seen your father for some years, I cannot be deceived in your physiognomy.

Will. I have been always reckoned like my father.

Long. But why do you come in this clandestine manner, to steal away my niece, when you may be sure Sir William Merryden would be glad to dispose of his daughter so advantageously?

Will. Why, sir, partly to avoid (what some people might censure as an indecorum) the solemnity of a *publick* marriage, in my father's present situation; and partly, I must confess, sir, to induce Miss Longfield to complete the felicity of my worthy friend Capt. Johnson.

Long. That, sir, let me tell you, was a very dishonourable motive, and which I have reason to resent.

Will.

Will. I hope not, fir, if you please to listen to Mr. Goldwire; who, I am sure, will do justice to Capt. Johnson and his expectations.

Long. (to Goldwire) Pray, do you know that gentleman, Mr. Goldwire?

Gold. I cannot say but I do know him, fir, too well.

Long. There, fir; what have you to say now?

Gold. He has occasioned a great deal of *uneasiness* in my family; and I should be sorry to see him married to *your* daughter.

Long. I dare say, you would, fir.

Gold. Yes, fir; because I still hoped, that Capt. Johnson might be brought to marry *my* daughter.

Long. To marry *your* daughter, Mr. Goldwire!

Gold. Yes, fir; this gentleman is nephew to Mr. Deputy Johnson, an intimate friend of mine, worth fifty thousand pounds; and if the young people could have liked each other, it would have made us both happy.

Long. (to Letitia.) And so, Miss Letty, you have given this noble captain the preference to your cousin William, whom I intended for your husband.

Letitia. Sir, I have the same affection and regard for my cousin, which he has expressed for me.

Long. Well; I'll say no more about the matter at present. He has slighted *you* in his theatrical character; and though he still, I find, acts the Narcissus, you shall not, like Echo, pine away for a lover: but if I find what Mr. Goldwire says of Capt. Johnson to be true, I may perhaps consider of it, and not oppose your inclinations.

Just. Sh. That's right again! if one will not, another will, or "why was the market made?"

Will. Then, sir, as we are provided with special licences, I hope you will not defer our happiness; but permit Mr. Jones to perform the ceremony before this good company.

Long. No, no! young man; not so fast—there are many enquiries to be made, and many preliminaries to be settled: and, if I *do* consent, my daughter shall be married in the parish church, and in the canonical hours. But I must know first what Capt. Johnson's uncle will do for him.

Gold. That you may soon know, sir, for I expect him at my house to-morrow: and I will pledge myself, that, upon such an occasion, Mr. Johnson will come up to the height of your wishes.

Long. Well; I can only repeat that, if I find matters answer my expectations, as the Captain, I
find,

find, has already secured my daughter's heart, I will not refuse him her hand; and though her cousin has renounced her, and she is a slighted maid, she shall soon be a joyful bride.

Capt. Johnf. Sir, you will make me happy to the utmost of my wishes; and, I trust, you will never have cause to repent of your generosity.

Re-enter Mrs. and Miss GOLDWIRE.

Gold. And so my poor girl will be deprived of her lover at last.

Miss Gold. (*aside to her mother.*) Lord! what is papa talking of?

Long. Why, as she seemed to admire our Narcissus, let Miss Goldwire have him.

Billy Mer. (*looking towards Miss Goldwire.*) I wish, sir, Miss Goldwire would ratify your proposal.

Long. Though he is a younger brother, he has *expectations*, and, what is better, has a certainty of a good family living of four hundred pounds a-year, which is held for him. And I liked his character so well, that, as I told you, I intended him for my son-in-law.

Gold. Well, sir, this may be discussed at our leisure—I should be proud of the alliance: and, as I can

give my daughter a competent fortune, I shall let *her* also please herself in an affair so essential to her happiness.

Just. Sh. Right again!

Mrs. Gold. I hope, Mr. Goldwire, you will let the young people be *acquainted*, before you marry them.

Just. Sh. Most young people are *acquainted* (now-a-days) *before* they are married.

Gold. By all means in the world! my dear, I would not precipitate matters; but as Capt. Johnson, you find, has taken Mr. Merryden's intended bride, I should not be sorry to see him make reprisals, and a reciprocal *change* take place.

Billy Mer. If the young lady will *echo* back your last words, I will no longer be a Narcissus.

Just. Sh. Silence gives consent,—that's the upshot of the matter.

Gold. Well; I hope the young people will find each other mutually agreeable; and that a '*nuptial coalition*' will take place, which will be agreeable to all parties.

Exeunt all but Mr. JOHN, (Goldwire's butler) and Mrs. JOYCE.

John. Well; they have chosen their partners—'tis our turn next:—if you will come to London, I will

will get you a place in the city (as I told you) till we can think of some way of business, if you chuse to settle.

Joyce. Well, if I do consent, don't be jealous of that fribble young Merryden, for I never liked him; and as he has jilted me, I shall be glad to be revenged.

John. Who is that, watching us there?

Joyce. Only that clown Tom, who his sweeping the stage.

John. Clown, indeed!

A SONG FOR THE GALLERIES.

Tune, 'What though you call me Country Lafs.'

Tom, (overhearing them.)

What though you call me *Country Clown*,
Because I ne'er feed London town,
If laugh'st at me, I'll knock thee down,
If thou dar'st come this woy.

Joyce.

What though you call me *Waiting Maid*,
If I my cards had wisely play'd,

I need

I need not thus have been betray'd
By that poor foolish boy.

Tom.

That saucy, powder'd, fine-laced thing,
If he dare fight—come, make a ring,
I'll gee thee good as thou shalt bring,
Let Jethro see fair play.

Joyce.

Though I must now obey the call
Of these proud folks at Longfield-hall,
When got to town, we'll have our ball
And routs, as well as they.

Tom.

What tho' on Dunsmore I kept sheep,
With him I'll wrestle, run, or leap,
Or, you that from the gallery peep,
If you dare step this way.

Joyce.

Though now you call me Mrs. Joyce,
Some 'squire may yet make me his choice:
Then, Tom, I'll make thee hear my voice,
Or turn thee, lad, away.

Tom.

Tom.

Oh! Mrs. Flirt, if that's the case,
I'll ne'er endure your angry face,
But voluntary leave my place—
I'll ne'er be turn'd away.

Joyce.

Though now I pin my lady's gown,
And run and fly, if she but frown,
I'll flaunt about, when we're in town,
To Sadler's Wells or play.

Tom.

Well! let all quarrels be forgot:
Come! Mr. John, let's drink a pot,
'Tis all for love—for I'm no sot,
And Jethro keeps the key.

Joyce.

Come, then, shake hands with Mr. John:
For we to town shall soon be gone,
Where nothing else we'll think upon
But pleasure, night and day.

All

All three in Chorus.

Our masters, though the house be theirs;
We've all the joys—without the cares,
Like them we'll act "High Life Below Stairs,"
And live more blest than they.

THE END.



EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE.

SUCH, then, is our connubial Coalition,
Each party match'd, and pleas'd in their condition;
And if this gallant audience like our play,
Why, all is well, we've nothing more to say;
But if you're tir'd, and *glad* the evening's o'er,
The Author says, nay *swears*, he'll write no more.
T' oblige a friend, this drama he began,
And finish'd it—to serve an honest man.
Thus to the *service press'd*, against his will,
He handled awkwardly, perhaps, his quill;
Yet did his best—but, now the battle's done,
With joy resigns the bayonet and gun.—
He wanted not the pay, nor fought for fame,
So home returns more gladly than he came.

But if a dearth of plays the publick fears,
Let but the drum beat up for volunteers,
In every coffee-house recruits you'll meet,
Or list some fauntering bard in every street,
Who'll tofs you up, if you're not over nice,
A Farce or Comick Pastoral in a trice—
Parsons and players, every sex and age,
Young lads* and lasses† now 'll supply the stage.

* Mr. Reynolds, the excellent dramatist, had then brought his first play upon the stage at eighteen.

† Mrs. C. and Mrs. J

Or, let our Queen Thalia speak the word,
 The soldier† takes his pen, and quits his sword;
 In short, who'd flinch, that *can* or *cannot* write,
 Fir'd with the slightest hopes of *one third* night?

But, should our moderate, modern wits disgust,
 You ne'er can want variety, I trust,
 While Shakespeare, Otway, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Rowe,
 Or Steele and Addison their aid bestow.

There humorous or pathetic scenes are found;
 And sterling wit and manly sense abound:
Their names announc'd, as often as we will,
 Can never fail th' applauding house to fill.

"Though this (perhaps you'll tell me) may be true,
 "Each girl has read *their* works quite through and through,
 "They're now a *bore*, and we want something new."

Let then some artist* of the tuneful band
 Our old dramatick poet take in hand:
 Let Shakespeare's tedious tragedies be clipp'd,
 And with soft airs and choruses equipp'd;
 Let Hamlet hail the Ghost in decent rhyme,
 Or fierce Othello to the flute keep time;
 Let Cassius and stern Brutus plot in song,
 And chaunt in thrilling strains their country's wrong;

† An excellent modern Comedy, by a noble General.

* Something of this kind was then attempted.

Be every speech to melting musick set,
And let them scold and squabble in duet;
Then Italy shall sound our favourite's name,
And Shakespeare rival great Goldoni's fame.
To please a Monk, † if Virgil wanted rhyme,
Musick may sure make Shakespeare more sublime.
Thus you'll have something *new* and quite the *ton!*
And Shakespeare boast more beauties than his *own*.

Nov. 1788.

† A well-known fact: see Spectator.



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